Womens' Cell in Indian Embassies

344. SHRIMATI MOHSINA KIDWAI: Will the Minister of OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government plan to establish women's cells in Indian embassies abroad to tackle the offences in NRI weddings and enhance support systems for women trapped in distress situations in alien lands;

(b) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the number of cases of abandoned women by their NRI husbands that have been reported so far and the steps Government propose to take to provide legal, medical and financial help to such trapped and abandoned women?

THE MINISTER OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS (SHRI VAYALAR RAVI): (a) and (b) No, Sir. However, when such cases are brought to the notice of the Missions, they are extending support in all such cases, wherever necessary.

(c) The Government is taking various measures to create awareness on this issue. The measures include publishing a guidance booklet on marriage to overseas Indians and publicity through print and electronic media. The Ministry organized a National Consultation in Delhi in February 2006 and a Workshop in Chandigarh in June 2006 to address the problems relating to marriages with overseas Indian. Another workshop is being organized in collaboration with the National Commission for Women in Kerala in September, 2006.

Panchayat elections in Jharkhand

345. MS. MABEL REBELLO: Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

(a) the reasons for which Panchayat elections have not been held in Jharkhand so far;

(b) whether Government propose to settle the issues and hold Panchayat elections early;

(c) whether Government have the intention to compensate Jharkhand people by allocating the money they should have goat *via* Panchayats,

(since no Panchayat in Jharkhand) directly to the State Government since Government of India give money directly to Panchayats all over the country; and

(d) the amount of money Jharkhand people have lost for not having the Panchayats for the last five years?

THE MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) Panchayat elections have not been held in Jharkhand so far on account of the Jharkhand High Court striking down the provisions of the Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 and the provisions of the Jharkhand Panchayati. Raj Act 2001 relating to reservations for SCs, STs and OBCs, as under:—

(i) 2nd proviso to clause (g) of Section 4 of the provisions of the Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 which stipulates that all seats of Chairpersons of Panchayats at all levels in Scheduled areas shall be reserved for the Scheduled-Tribes.

(ii) Section 21 (B), Section 40(B) and Section 55(B) of the Jharkhand Panchayat Raj Act, 2001 which seek to give effect to the 2nd proviso to clause (g) of Section 4 of the 1996 Act; and

(iH) Sub-section 2 to Section 17(B), Sub-section 2 to Section 36(B) and sub-section 2 to Section 51 (B) of the 2001 Act which seek to provide reservations of upto 80% for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and other backward classes with not less than 50% reservations in favour of Scheduled Tribes.

In view of the Order of the Hon'ble High Court of Jharkhand, the Government of Jharkhand has withdrawn the notification for the election of Panchayats in Jharkhand.

(b) The Union of India has since filed an SLP in the Supreme Court of India (CC No. 12459/2005) seeking to quash the judgement of the Hon'ble High Court of Jharkhand, The Chief Secretary to the Government of Jharkhand, Secretary, Rural Development, Government of Jharkhand and the Election Commission, Government of Jharkhand are Proforma Respondents in this matter. The Minister of Panchayati Raj has also written to the Chief Minister Jharkhand for holding elections in the State at the earliest as per the Constitutional provisions and the provisions of PESA.

The Union of India has also requested Additional Solicitor General to make a special mention in the Supreme Court of India for an early hearing of the case.

(c) and (d) The money allocated to the Panchayats is through individual centrally sponsored schemes administered by different Ministries of Government of India under their respective guidelines. The monitoring of these guidelines is the responsibility of the sponsoring Ministry concerned.

Village Resource Centres in Andhra Pradesh

346. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to set up Village Resource Centres to provide better services;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) by when these are likely to be set up;

(d) whether the locations of the proposed Centres have been identified; and

(e) if so, the details thereof pertaining to the State of Andhra Pradesh.

THE MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Village Resources Centres are envisaged to provide various space technology enabled services such as telemedicine, tele-education, natural resources information and advisories on agriculture, land and water resources, wheather and fisheries etc., directly to the grassroots, through a single window mechanism.

(c) Village Resources Centres are already being set up, in different States, in association with selected NGOs, Trusts and State Government departments; and till date 108 Village Resource Centres have been set up-

(d) and (e) In Andhra Pradesh, 2 Village Resource Centres have so far been set up-one at Moosapet in Mahabubnagar district, and the other